



June 17, 2010

Janet Napolitano  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
301 7th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20528-0150

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

Last month, Transportation Secretary LaHood attended a meeting of the Chinatown Working Group, a community-based planning initiative that supports the Chinatown community in Lower Manhattan. As the elected officials representing the Lower Manhattan community, we are writing to follow up on a request you should have received from Secretary LaHood as a result of that meeting, asking that the Department of Homeland Security conduct a risk/security assessment of a transportation issue in Lower Manhattan. The issue concerns the closure of Park Row, a vital thoroughfare for the residents of our district. As you may know, this street, which connects two important neighborhoods, Chinatown and the Financial District, has been closed since the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001.

While we understand the security concerns of the NYPD, whose headquarters are nearby, this closure has brought significant hardship for residents. Those with cars who live on these blocks have had to show ID to get home, businesses have been negatively impacted because of the decrease in traffic, and many who relied on Park Row as a means to travel between Chinatown and the Financial District have been inconvenienced.

While so many other streets that were closed after 9/11 have since reopened – including those around the federal courthouse in Manhattan, and even those surrounding the White House and the U.S. Capitol in Washington – this key roadway has been an unfortunate exception.

We believe it would be enormously helpful if the Department of Homeland Security could lead a risk/security assessment of the necessity of the Park Row closure with local law enforcement agencies to help us determine how this street can be safely reopened. We are requesting a meeting with your agency and the community in order to discuss our concerns and next steps in this process.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Our offices remain ready to assist you in any way they can.

Sincerely,

Congressman Jerrold Nadler

Assemblyman Sheldon Silver

Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer

State Senator Daniel Squadron

Councilmember Margaret S. Chin

cc: Secretary Ray LaHood, Department of Transportation  
Commissioner Ray Kelly, NYPD